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**AURORA THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS
JOE ORTON'S COMIC MASTERPIECE**

LOOT

APRIL 3 - MAY 3 (OPENS: APRIL 9)

*Featuring Newly Uncovered Dialogue Previously Censored
From Orton's Original Script*

BERKELEY, CA (February 25, 2020) Aurora Theatre Company continues its dynamic 28th season with Joe Orton's **LOOT**. Former Aurora Artistic Director **Tom Ross** (*Everything is Illuminated, This Is How It Goes, A Delicate Balance*) directs this comedic tour de force.

The cast features **Warren David Keith** (*Widowers' Houses, The First Grade, The Devil's Disciple*), **Dean Linnard**, **Susan Lynskey**, **Nick Mandracchia**, **Josh Matthews**, **Patrick Russell** (*A Bright New Boise, Wilder Times, Body Awareness*), and **Danny Scheie** (*Mystery of Irma Vep, The Monster-Builder*).

LOOT runs April 3 - May 3 (**Opens: April 9**).

Hailed as a darkly comic masterpiece, **LOOT** follows the fortunes of two young thieves in swinging '60s London. Dennis works for an undertaker and Hal's old Mum has just died. Having robbed a bank, the lads need a place to stash the loot and Mum's coffin seems like the perfect place – but where to stash poor Mum? Playing roughhouse with the conventions of popular farce,

Orton creates a world gone mad, hilariously examining hypocritical mores still percolating in our current time.

The *Huffington Post* called **LOOT** a “comic time bomb going off exactly on schedule and obliterating all in its radius with outlandish entertainment.”

“I'm so pleased to welcome my predecessor and good friend Tom Ross back to Aurora to direct Joe Orton's **LOOT**,” said Artistic Director Josh Costello. “Orton's ability to combine biting wit, outrageous situations, and incisive social commentary is unrivaled. It's fitting that we're doing *Loot* so soon after *The Importance of Being Earnest*; Orton was a clear heir to Oscar Wilde's legacy. Tom and his team are putting together a hilarious production that I can't wait to share with our audience.”

Joe Orton was an English playwright and author known for his dark and salacious comedies with subject matter that was often considered too taboo for mid 1960s London. Other notable work includes *The Ruffian on the Stair*, *Entertaining Mr. Sloane*, *The Erpingham Camp*, *The Good and Faithful Servant*, *What The Butler Saw*, and *Funeral Games*, as well as the screenplay to *Up Against It* for the Beatles.

The Orton estate has granted Aurora Theatre Company permission to reinstate Joe Orton's original "lost" **LOOT** dialogue that, when the play was written in the 1960s was censored by the Lord Chamberlain. The play was censored for a number of reasons including that homosexuality was illegal in England at the time, and that Orton, a gay man, reflected his sexuality in his work. Additionally, Orton's swipes at religion, the Royal Family and police corruption were heavily cut.

Actor Danny Scheie spent time in the Orton Archive in Leicester, England and in London making copies of Orton's original drafts. Production director Tom Ross, using letters by Lord Chamberlain as a map, went through the numerous drafts reconstructing Orton's original vision, which includes a live actor playing the corpse, which was forbidden in the 1960s version. Aurora's production will be the first time American audiences will be hearing the censored lines.

Tom Ross, former long-time artistic director, has staged over 30 productions at Aurora, including last year's *Everything is Illuminated*; Edward Albee's *A Delicate Balance*; *Betrayal*, *The Birthday Party*, and the U.S. premiere of *Temple*. He wrote and directed the long-running *A Karen Carpenter Christmas*, and for eight years he was a producer of San Francisco's legendary Solo Mio Festival. Before coming to the Bay Area, Ross spent eight years at New York's Public Theater as executive assistant to Joseph Papp, and as co-director of play and musical development.

Ross said: "Joe Orton was an instigator and he did so with the wit and comic flourish of Oscar Wilde. But his issues were with society as he experienced it: police corruption, the hypocrisies of organized religion and institutions, blind subjugation to authority and prejudice against homosexuality. A gay man like Orton, I first read his works in the early eighties when AIDS was killing so many heroes and friends. Orton's oeuvre was savagely liberating and punk and theatrically outrageous. So alive and kicking that I became a devotee. Years later, I discovered that the British government had censored his work on political and moral grounds and that uncensored drafts remained archived and unproduced. I'm very grateful to the Orton estate for allowing Aurora to reinstate that wickedly funny 'disallowed' dialogue into our production."

Ross has assembled an all-star cast for **LOOT**.

Warren David Keith returns to Aurora where he was most recently seen in *Widowers' Houses*. Other Aurora productions include *The First Grade*, *The Devil's Disciple*, *Hysteria*, *A Life in the Theater*, and *Death Defying Acts*. Other Bay Area theatre credits include Cal Shakes, A.C.T., Berkeley Rep, Magic Theatre, SF Playhouse, and The Marsh Berkeley and San Francisco. Screen credits include *The Last Black Man in San Francisco*, *Haiku Tunnel*, *Love and Taxes*, *Raising Arizona*, *Fargo*, *The Big Lebowski*, and *A Serious Man*.

Actor and teaching artist **Dean Linnard** makes his Aurora debut. Recent credits include SF Playhouse, Cal Shakes, Marin Shakespeare Company, Left Edge Theatre, Vermont Shakespeare Festival, Luna Stage, Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, and the national tour of *The Lightning Thief*. He holds a BFA from New York University Tisch School of the Arts.

Susan Lynskey also makes her Aurora debut. She was seen most recently off-Broadway in *The Jewish Wife* at New Light Theater Project and as young Margaret Thatcher in 59E59 Theaters' *Handbagged*. Bay Area credits include Berkeley Rep and A.C.T. Other credits include Arena Stage, Kansas City Rep, Round House, Metro Stage, Olney Theatre Center, The Kennedy Center, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Lynskey has been recognized with Helen Hayes nominations for Outstanding Lead and Supporting Actress and the DC Audience Choice Award. She is an OSF Acting Company member and is currently filming *Thespian* for Amazon. Lynskey fosters new plays with leading incubators including The Kennedy Center, Magic Theatre, Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor, and National New Play Network.

Nick Mandracchia makes his Aurora debut. Most recently he appeared in *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* at Custom Made Theatre Company. Other stage credits include Foothill Music Theatre, Marin Shakespeare Company, Santa Cruz Shakespeare Company, City Lights, Dragon Theatre, Town Hall Theatre Company, and Palo Alto Players.

Josh Matthews also makes his Aurora debut. Matthews is the co-artistic director of Under the Table, and he also performs with theatre company Third Rail Projects, including in *Ghost Light* at Lincoln Center and *Then She Fell* (*New York Times* Top 10 Pick). Matthews co-wrote and directed *Bad Kid* at Axis Theatre (*New York Times* Critic's Pick) and directed the Chicago Neo-Futurist's Production of *Mike Mother* (*Time Out* Critic's Pick). Matthews works as a hospital clown with the Medical Clown Project and a lead teaching artist for the Prescott Circus Theatre.

Patrick Russell returns to Aurora (*A Bright New Boise*, *Wilder Times*, *Body Awareness*, *Trouble in Mind*, *Awake and Sing!*). Russell appeared most recently in *Measure for Measure* at Marin Shakespeare Company and *Frost/Nixon* at Theatreworks. Other credits include Cal Shakes, SF Playhouse, Magic Theatre, CenterREP, and Shotgun Players. Film credits include *Being Us* and the award-winning animated short film *Rapunzel's Etymology of Zero*. Russell teaches acting and movement at UC Berkeley and A.C.T., and is the co-founder of The Actors Space professional actor training program in San Francisco. He received his MFA from A.C.T.'s Master of Fine Arts Program in Acting.

Actor and director **Danny Scheie** also returns to Aurora (*The Monster-Builder*, *Mystery of Irma Vep*). Stage credits include A.C.T., Cal Shakes, Berkeley Rep, South Coast Rep, Arena Stage, Old Globe, Actors Theater of Louisville, Z Space, Magic Theatre, and Yale Rep. He recently played Nurse Bruce in this season's *Almost Family* on Fox. Scheie holds a professorship of Theater Arts at UC Santa Cruz and a PhD in Dramatic Art from UC Berkeley.

The creative team for **LOOT** includes **Karen Schleifer**--Stage Manager; **Richard Olmsted**--Set; **Callie Floor**--Costumes; **Jeff Rowlings**--Lights; **Teddy Hulsker**--Sound; **Nancy Carlin**--Dialect; and, **Jaron Hollander**--Movement.

CALENDAR EDITORS

Aurora Theatre Company continues its dynamic 28th season with Joe Orton's **LOOT**. Former Aurora Artistic Director **Tom Ross** (*Everything is Illuminated*, *Luna Gale*, *A Delicate Balance*, *Mud Blue Sky*) directs this comedic tour de force featuring newly uncovered dialogue that was previously censored from Orton's original script.

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DATES

Previews: Friday 4/3 and Saturday 4/4 at 8 p.m.
Sunday, 4/5 at 2 p.m. only.
Tuesday, 4/7 and Wednesday, 4/8 at 7 p.m.

Open: **Thursday, April 9**

Close: **Sunday, May 3**

Shows: Tuesday and Wednesday at 7 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.
Sunday at 2 p.m. & 7 p.m.

WHERE Aurora Theatre Company | 2081 Addison Street | Berkeley, CA

TICKETS For single tickets (\$35-\$70) or subscriptions (\$111-\$396), the public can call **(510) 843-4822** or visit www.auroratheatre.org.

PRE PRODUCTION IMAGES <http://bit.ly/LOOTAuroraPress>

PRESS **Please do not reply to this press release for review tickets. Press review invites will be sent to selected media.**

ABOUT AURORA THEATRE COMPANY

Aurora Theatre Company is known for work that invigorates audiences and artists through a shared experience of professional, intimate theatre. Aurora challenges itself and the broader community to do better, think deeper, laugh louder, and cast wider nets of empathy toward the world. Through its productions of both classic and new works, it supports the Bay Area community by hiring local artists and artisans. It has an operating budget of \$2.2 million.

Aurora Theatre Company gratefully acknowledges Season Sponsors: Ed & Liliane Schneider and Craig and Kathy Moody. Sponsors: Kathleen Garrison & David Wood. Associate Sponsors: Ellen & Barry Levine. Helen M. Marcus. Alison Teeman & Michael Yovino-Young.

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